

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify methods of writing introductions for narratives
- Identify methods of writing introductions for essays
- Apply methods of writing effective introductions for narratives
- Apply methods of writing effective introductions for narratives

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 219
- **Teaching Model**, Introductions to Narratives, p. 221
- **Teaching Model**, Introductions to Essays, p. 222
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 223–224
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 225

Teach

- 1. Introductions:** Have students imagine that they are just starting to watch a movie on video or DVD. The beginning of the film is boring, so they quickly turn it off. After a bad first impression, they didn't bother to keep watching. Explain that in writing as in movies, good first impressions are important. In a composition, a writer only has one chance to make that first impression with readers—in the **introduction**.
- 2. Teaching Introductions:** Distribute the **Lesson Summary** and go over the **Academic Vocabulary** section with students. Then go over the **Here's How** section, discussing each step used to develop an introduction.
 - **Determine Purpose:** Explain that different kinds of introductions are appropriate for different purposes. If the purpose in a composition is to amuse, you might establish a comic tone. If it is to instruct, you should make clear what a reader will learn.
 - **Determine Audience:** Ask: How might the audience for a piece vary? To what different audiences might a composition be addressed? (*Sample: younger children; peers or classmates; users of certain equipment; readers, moviegoers, or diners; cooks, gardeners, or hobbyists; voters, etc.*) Then ask: How might the introduction to an essay vary, depending on age of audience? (*Sample: For a younger audience, you might begin with background needed to understand the essay. If your audience is older, you might introduce with a topic-related fact.*)
 - **Draft a Thesis Statement:** Emphasize that essays and other nonfiction compositions differ from narratives in that the introduction should *always* contain a clear **thesis statement**—a sentence or two stating the main idea and purpose. (NOTE: If students are unfamiliar with thesis statements, review Writing Lesson 21, p. 205.)
 - **Experiment:** Note that personal narratives need not begin with *I*, and stories need not start *Once upon a time*. Emphasize that writers launch into a work and grab readers' attention. Have students browse textbooks or magazines to share the variety of introductory sentences. For essays, point out that although an

introduction must include a thesis statement, it need not open—or lead—with it. Often the thesis statement appears after the lead, at the introduction's end.

- **Evaluate:** Ask students to compare the questions used to evaluate introductions for each type of writing. Point out that essay introductions have more jobs to do than narrative introductions.

3. Guided Practice for Narratives: Distribute the **Teaching Model**, Introductions to Narratives. Discuss each example in the chart with students.

- Ask students to discuss ways that some of the **leads** plunge readers into the middle of a conflict. (*Fern sees an ax and senses trouble; a ball player misses a catch; and Charlie wakes up confused and alarmed.*)
- Point out the lead that introduces Thomas. Note the calm tone. Elicit that the passing reference to “the accident” raises questions in readers’ minds.
- After you have discussed the models, read or display other ways to begin a narrative:

EXAMPLE

Provide a description.

The old house creaked and sighed in the wind as if it were talking in its sleep. Mariana gazed out from her bedroom window and saw a sky of ragged, racing clouds. The full moon shone cold upon the shadowed land.

Ask: What mood does the description create? (*Sample: a mysterious mood.*)

EXAMPLE

Use sound effects.

Mariana heard a *scrape, scrape* like cat’s claws against the cellar door.

Ask: How does this type of lead build suspense? (*Sample: It raises questions in the reader’s mind.*)

EXAMPLE

Begin at the end.

My runaway cat was safe and sound at last!

Ask: Does this lead build suspense or kill suspense by giving the end away? (*Accept all answers.*) Point out that, while this kind of beginning reassures readers, it also always raises questions in readers’ minds.

4. Guided Practice for Essays: Distribute the **Teaching Model**, Introductions to Essays. Have students read the model introduction, noting the placement of the thesis statement at the end.

- Point out that the writer begins with an **anecdote**, a personal story related to the topic.
- Ask students if they prefer the anecdote or an opening such as “In this essay I will discuss the popularity of dogs as pets in the United States.” (*Most students will prefer the engaging anecdote.*)
- Then go over the other example introductions in the chart.

QUICK CHECK. Ask students how introductions to essays differ from introductions to narratives. (*Sample: Introductions to essays must contain a clear thesis statement introducing the composition’s main idea.*)

Practice and Apply

Practice activities involving introductions appear on pp. 223–224.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet A

1. d 2. b 3. d 4. c 5. c

Answers: Practice Worksheet B

1. *Volunteer work benefits both the volunteer and those being helped.*
2. *Why should people volunteer? Those who have never volunteered might be surprised at how much one can gain from the experience. Volunteer work can benefit both the volunteer and those being helped.*
3. *Here’s a way you can help yourself and people in your community—begin volunteering. Volunteer work can benefit both the volunteer and those being helped.*
4. *Here’s a way you can help yourself and people in your community—begin volunteering.*

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** should answer four of the five items correctly.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** should provide complete answers close to the samples, for at least three items, particularly for item 1.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Lesson Summary**. Focus on the definitions in **Academic Vocabulary**. Then review the two **Teaching Models**. For each type of introduction, brainstorm one or two new examples with students. Then have them complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 225.

Sample Answers: Reteaching Worksheet

1. *a; It captures my interest because I want to know what Juan is urging Sheila not to do.*
2. *c; It does not capture my interest because it does not indicate that the story will be exciting; the opening generalization is overused.*
3. *b; It captures my interest because I want to know what happens to the train and its passengers.*
4. *b*
5. *b*
6. *b*